



ANTECHINUS MINUTISSIMUS, Gould.

Gould & Riech.
Hallemandel.

ANTECHINUS MINUTISSIMUS, *Gould.*

Minute Antechinus.

Antechinus minutissimus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1852.

THIS is by far the least of the Marsupials that have as yet been discovered in Australia. The accompanying figures which were taken from fully adult specimens represent the animal of the natural size. The little *Antechini* of Australia constitute two very distinct groups or subsections; the form of one of which is characterized by a more elegant and lengthened contour, a sharper and more attenuated muzzle, larger ears and longer, more slender and mouse-like formed tarsi, such as is seen in *Antechinus albipes*, *A. fuliginosus* and *A. murinus*; and the other by a shorter and bluffer head, smaller rounded ears, and extremely short and broad tarsi, as is perceptible in *A. flavipes*, *A. maculatus*, and the present species, *A. minutissimus*. I am quite sure that this difference in structure is accompanied by an equally marked difference in the habits and actions of the animals constituting these two groups: I had many opportunities of observing the *A. flavipes* in a state of nature, and noticed that it exhibited some very curious actions while traversing the large boles and limbs of the trees, both those that were prostrate as well as those still erect: its mode of progression was more like that of the squirrel than of any other animal with which I can compare it; as it traversed the limbs in every direction by leaps, with widely spread legs, sometimes sideways, at others with the head downwards; indeed in any position in which it wished to move.

The native habitat of the *A. minutissimus* is the districts on the eastern coast of Australia, in the neighbourhood of Moreton Bay. I have specimens collected by Mr. Strange labelled with the native name of *Pimburam*.

Fur short and closely applied to the skin; the whole of the upper surface, including the tail, greyish brown, the latter being paler beneath; chin and throat pale buff; feet buffy brown; under surface of the body and legs greyish buff gradually blending with the brown of the upper surface, but the buffy tint predominating on the centre of the abdomen and vent.

	inches.
Length from the nose to the root of the tail	$2\frac{3}{8}$
„ of tail	$2\frac{3}{8}$
„ „ arm and hand	$\frac{3}{8}$
„ „ tarsi and toes	$\frac{7}{16}$
„ „ face from the tip of the nose to the base of the ear . . .	$\frac{9}{16}$
„ „ ear	$\frac{1}{4}$

The figures are of the natural size.